

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
MACON DIVISION**

DONALD JEREMY TAUL,	:	
	:	
Plaintiff	:	
	:	
VS.	:	
	:	
CORRECT HEALTH BIBB, L.L.C.,	:	CIVIL No: 5:12-CV-0332-MTT-CHW
	:	
Defendants	:	PROCEEDINGS UNDER 42 U.S.C. §1983
	:	BEFORE THE U. S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE

ORDER & RECOMMENDATION

Plaintiff **DONALD JEREMY TAUL**, a pretrial detainee currently confined at the Bibb County Law Enforcement Center, has filed a *pro se* civil rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Because Plaintiff is a prisoner “seeking redress from a governmental entity or [an] officer or employee of a governmental entity,” the district court is required to conduct a preliminary screening of his Complaint. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The undersigned has now conducted this review and cannot find that Plaintiff’s claims are frivolous. His claims will thus be allowed to go forward for further factual development.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

When conducting preliminary screening pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a), the district court must accept all factual allegations in the complaint as true. Brown v. Johnson, 387 F.3d 1344, 1347 (11th Cir. 2004). *Pro se* pleadings, like the one in this case, are also “held to a less stringent standard than pleadings drafted by attorneys and will, therefore, be liberally construed.” Tannenbaum v. United States, 148 F.3d 1262, 1263 (11th Cir. 1998).

Nonetheless, a district court is still required to dismiss a prisoner complaint after the initial review if the complaint (1) “is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted”; or (2) “seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.” 28 U.S.C. §1915A(b); see also 28 U.S.C. §1915(2)(B) (requiring the same of prisoners proceeding *in forma pauperis*). A claim is frivolous when it appears from the face of the complaint that the factual allegations are “clearly baseless” or that the legal theories are “indisputably meritless.” Carroll v. Gross, 984 F.2d 392, 393 (11th Cir. 1993). A complaint is thus properly dismissed by the district court *sua sponte* if it is found to be “without arguable merit either in law or fact.” Bilal v. Driver, 251 F.3d 1346, 1349 (11th Cir. 2001).

A complaint “fails to state a claim” when it does not include “enough factual matter (taken as true)” to “give the defendant fair notice of what the . . . claim is and the grounds upon which it rests[.]” Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555-56 (2007) (“factual allegations must be enough to raise a right to relief above the speculative level.”). In other words, the complaint must contain something more than “a statement of facts that merely creates a suspicion [of] a legally cognizable right of action.” Id.

To state a claim for relief under § 1983, a plaintiff must allege that: (1) an act or omission deprived him of a right, privilege, or immunity secured by the Constitution or a statute of the United States; and (2) the act or omission was committed by a person acting under color of state law. Hale v. Tallapoosa County, 50 F.3d 1579, 1581 (11th Cir. 1995). If a litigant cannot satisfy these requirements, or fails to provide factual allegations in support of his claim or claims, the complaint is subject to dismissal. See Chappell v. Rich, 340 F.3d 1279, 1282-84 (11th Cir. 2003) (affirming court’s dismissal of a § 1983 complaint because factual allegations were insufficient to support alleged constitutional violation); see also 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b) (dictating that a

complaint, or any portion thereof, that does not meet standard in § 1915A “shall” be dismissed).

ANALYSIS OF CLAIMS

The present Complaint arises out of an alleged deliberate indifference to Plaintiff’s serious medical needs. Plaintiff alleges that he suffers from a “severe seizure disorder” and that he notified Defendant Nurse Fair of his medical condition when he entered the prison. Nurse Fair apparently took no action to ensure Plaintiff’s safety until such time that he could be seen by a physician. He was not provided with his medication or otherwise monitored by medical staff. Plaintiff was instead placed in a cell with no access to an emergency call button or similar device Plaintiff could use if he needed immediate medical assistance.

A week passed before Plaintiff was able to see a physician, Defendant Dr. Jerkins, and it was apparently an even longer period before Plaintiff received medication to prevent his seizures. Plaintiff also alleges that the medication finally prescribed by Dr. Jerkins is not effective; that he told Dr. Jerkins the medication was not effective on multiple occasions; and that the physician and his staff, including Defendant Patricia Johnson, were unwilling to change his medication. Defendants also allegedly failed to ensure that Plaintiff received his medication every day and continued to allow Plaintiff to be confined in an area where he was not monitored and could not call for help if he needed medical assistance.

Plaintiff believes that this treatment has endangered (and continues to endanger) his life. He claims to have suffered “several mild seizures” during this time. According to Plaintiff, these seizures, though “mild,” cause him a great deal of muscle pain. Plaintiff also alleges that the seizures result in “contusions” and “swelling” in his knees, elbows, and even his head. Quick movements now allegedly make Plaintiff dizzy, and he is beginning to suffer from “short-term” memory loss. Plaintiff claims that he would not have suffered these injuries if Defendants had not

been indifferent to his medical needs and the risk posed to his physical safety. Plaintiff now fears that he may suffer a more severe seizure in the near future if he does not receive proper medical treatment and monitoring.

After viewing these allegations in the light most favorable to Plaintiff, the undersigned finds that it would be premature to dismiss Plaintiff's claims against Defendants Nurse Fair, Doctor Jerkins, and Patricia Johnson at this stage of the proceedings. See Carter v. Galloway, 352 F.3d 1346, 1349 (11th Cir. 2003) ("An Eighth Amendment violation will occur when a substantial risk of serious harm, of which the official is subjectively aware, exists and the official does not 'respond[] reasonably to the risk' . . .") (cites omitted). It is thus **ORDERED** that service be made on these Defendants and that they file an Answer, or such other response as may be appropriate under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, 28 U.S.C. § 1915, and the Prison Litigation Reform Act. Defendants are reminded of the duty to avoid unnecessary service expenses, and of the possible imposition of expenses for failure to waive service pursuant to Rule 4(d).

It is **RECOMMENDED**, however, that Defendants "Correct Health Bibb, L.L.C" and "Bibb County Sheriff's Office" be **DISMISSED** from this action. Plaintiff's Complaint does not include any allegations suggesting that "Correct Health" may be held liable for the alleged constitutional violations, and the "Bibb County Sheriff's Office" is not an entity that can be sued under § 1983. See Douglas v. Yates, 535 F.3d 1316, 1322 (11th Cir. 2008) (court may dismiss parties not linked to a claim); Presnell v. Paulding County, 454 F. App'x 763, 768 (11th Cir. 2011) (Georgia county sheriff's department was not a legal entity subject to being sued).

Plaintiff may serve and file written objections to this recommendation with the district judge to whom this case is assigned within fourteen (14) days after being served a copy of this Order. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

DUTY TO ADVISE OF ADDRESS CHANGE

During the pendency of this action, all parties shall keep the Clerk of this Court and all opposing attorneys and/or parties advised of their current address. Failure to promptly advise the Clerk of a change of address may result in the dismissal of a party's pleadings.

DUTY TO PROSECUTE ACTION

Plaintiff is also advised that he must diligently prosecute his Complaint or face the possibility that it will be dismissed under Rule 41(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure for failure to prosecute. Defendants are similarly advised that they are expected to diligently defend all allegations made against them and to file timely dispositive motions as hereinafter directed. This matter will be set down for trial when the Court determines that discovery has been completed and that all motions have been disposed of or the time for filing dispositive motions has passed.

FILING AND SERVICE OF MOTIONS, PLEADINGS, AND CORRESPONDENCE

It is the responsibility of each party to file original motions, pleadings, and correspondence with the Clerk of Court. A party need not serve the opposing party by mail if the opposing party is represented by counsel. In such cases, any motions, pleadings, or correspondence shall be served electronically at the time of filing with the Court. If any party is not represented by counsel, however, it is the responsibility of each opposing party to serve copies of all motions, pleadings, and correspondence upon the unrepresented party and to attach to said original motions, pleadings, and correspondence filed with the Clerk of Court a certificate of service indicating who has been served and where (i.e., at what address), when service was made, and how service was accomplished.

DISCOVERY

Plaintiff shall not commence discovery until an answer or dispositive motion has been filed on behalf of Defendants from whom discovery is sought by Plaintiff. Defendants shall not commence discovery until such time as an answer or dispositive motion has been filed. Once an answer or dispositive motion has been filed, the parties are authorized to seek discovery from one another as provided in the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Plaintiff's deposition may be taken at any time during the time period hereinafter set out, provided that prior arrangements are made with her custodian. Plaintiff is hereby advised that failure to submit to a deposition may result in the dismissal of her lawsuit under Rule 37 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

It is hereby **ORDERED** that discovery (including depositions and interrogatories) shall be completed within 90 days of the date of filing of an answer or dispositive motion by Defendants (whichever comes first) unless an extension is otherwise granted by the Court upon a showing of good cause therefor or a protective order is sought by Defendants and granted by the Court. This 90-day period shall run separately as to each Defendant beginning on the date of filing of each Defendant's answer or dispositive motion (whichever comes first). The scheduling of a trial may be advanced upon notification from the parties that no further discovery is contemplated or that discovery has been completed prior to the deadline.

Discovery materials shall not be filed with the Clerk of Court. No party shall be required to respond to any discovery not directed to him or served upon him by the opposing counsel/party. The undersigned incorporates herein those parts of the Local Rules imposing the following limitations on discovery: except with written permission of the Court first obtained, INTERROGATORIES may not exceed TWENTY-FIVE (25) to each party, REQUESTS FOR PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS AND THINGS under Rule 34 of the Federal Rules of Civil

Procedure may not exceed TEN (10) requests to each party, and REQUESTS FOR ADMISSIONS under Rule 36 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure may not exceed FIFTEEN (15) requests to each party. No party is required to respond to any request which exceed these limitations.

REQUESTS FOR DISMISSAL AND/OR JUDGMENT

Dismissal of this action or requests for judgment will not be considered in the absence of a separate motion therefor accompanied by a brief/memorandum of law citing supporting authorities. Dispositive motions should be filed at the earliest time possible, but in any event no later than thirty (30) days after the close of discovery unless otherwise directed by the Court.

DIRECTIONS TO CUSTODIAN OF PLAINTIFF

As previously ordered, the Warden of the institution wherein Plaintiff is incarcerated, or the Sheriff of any county where he is held in custody, and any successor custodians, shall each month cause to be remitted to the Clerk of this court twenty percent (20%) of the preceding month's income credited to Plaintiff's account at said institution until the \$350.00 filing fee has been paid in full. In accordance with provisions of the Prison Litigation Reform Act, Plaintiff's custodian is authorized to forward payments from the prisoner's account to the Clerk of Court each month until the filing fee is paid in full, provided the amount in the account exceeds \$10.00.

Collection of monthly payments from Plaintiff's trust fund account shall continue until the entire \$350.00 has been collected, notwithstanding the dismissal of Plaintiff's lawsuit or the granting of judgment against her prior to the collection of the full filing fee.

PLAINTIFF'S OBLIGATION TO PAY FILING FEE

Pursuant to provisions of the Prison Litigation Reform Act, in the event Plaintiff is hereafter released from the custody of the State of Georgia or any county thereof, she shall remain obligated to pay any balance due on the filing fee in this proceeding until said amount has been

paid in full; Plaintiff shall continue to remit monthly payments as required by the Prison Litigation Reform Act. Collection from Plaintiff of any balance due on the filing fee by any means permitted by law is hereby authorized in the event Plaintiff is released from custody and fails to remit payments. Plaintiff's Complaint is subject to dismissal if she has the ability to make monthly payments and fails to do so.

SO ORDERED and RECOMMENDED, this 19th day of December, 2012.

s/ Charles H. Weigle

Charles H. Weigle
United States Magistrate Judge